GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2446
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2008
OVERHAUL OF PDS
Angadi Shri Suresh Chanabasappa;Chandrappan Shri C.K.;Chavda Shri Harisinh Pratapsinh;Khan Shri Sunil;Mehta Shri Alok Kumar;Oram Shri Jual;Prasad Shri Hari Kewal;Rana Shri Kashi Ram;Rao Shri Kavuru Samba Siva;Thummar Shri Virjibhai

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to replace/overhaul the present Public Distribution System (PDS),Targeted Public Distribution System and Antyodaya Anna Yojana to improve their functioning in the light of the recommendations made by Justice Wadhwa and other Committees set up to evaluate these systems and suggest measures for improvement;

(b) if so,the details thereof;and

(c) the action taken to ensure adequate supply of foodgrains to poor at cheap prices and make the above systems more transparent and accountable?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH)

(a),(b), & (c): Targeted Public Distribution System focused on Below Poverty Line Families has been under implementation since June,1997.As a segment of TPDS, for better targeting of food subsidy at the poorest of the BPL families,Antyodaya Anna Yojana has been under implementation since December,2000.TPDS is operated under joint responsibility of Government of India and State Governments & UT Administrations. For successful implementation of TPDS,responsibilities are shared by Government of India and State & UT Governments.To facilitate smooth functioning of TPDS to ensure that foodgrains allocated by Government of India to States and UTs are distributed properly to targeted BPL and AAY families,the required legal frame work and regulatory mechanisms have been put in place.Apart from the provisions under the Essential Commodities Act,1955,Public Distribution (Control) Order,2001 has been issued by Central Govt.in August,2001.This frame work enables the States and UT Governments to takeall required action to ensure proper functioning of TPDS.

To streamline functioning of TPDS, Government has taken a series of measures.Apart from regular monitoring and review with State & UT Govts.,Government has been getting functioning of TPDS evaluated from time to time through independent agencies.Since earlier evaluation studies conducted by PEO, Planning Commission and ORG MARG reported in 2005 that there were diversions and leakages of foodgrains in many States and UTs, identification of targeted beneficiaries had exclusion and inclusion errors,and functioning of fair price shops was not financially viable,to streamline functioning of TPDS,steps taken by Government are of four categories:-

(a) For improving functioning of TPDS machinery, continuous review of lists of BPL and AAY families, door step delivery of foodgrains to fair price shops,timely availability of foodgrains at fair price shops, and training of staff as well as vigilance committee members are being emphasized.

(b) For greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, display of lists of BPL and AAY families at fair price shops,display of allocated quantities on web sites,adoption and implementation of revised Citizens' Charter, monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains to fair price shop and their distribution to ration card holders, and taking up publicity-cum-awareness campaign have been initiated.

(c) Improved vigilance at various levels and strict penal action against those involved in malpractices,including action against staff responsible for issuing ineligible ration cards and persons found in possession of such ration cards are being emphasized.

(d) Introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operation at various levels, smart-card-based delivery of essential commodities, use of global positioning system on vehicles transporting TPDS commodities and bar coding of ration cards etc. is being piloted.

To assess impact of all these initiatives, concurrent evaluation of TPDS has been taken up in 26 States & UTs.With these measures,functioning of TPDS is getting streamlined. Central Vigilance Committee headed by Shri D.P. Wadhwa,a retired judge of the Supreme Court has been set up by the Supreme Court to study TPDS.So far this Committee has submitted to Supreme Court a report on TPDS in Delhi.The Court has asked CVC to study TPDS in other States and its recommendations would be considered by the Court only thereafter.